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The New York Times

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Ferguson Fire Forces Largest Closing of Yosemite in Decades

By JOSE A. DEL REAL AND INYOUNG KANG

The Ferguson Fire, which is encroaching on Yosemite Valley, is just one of some 75 large fires stretching from Oklahoma to Alaska. Jim Wilson/The New York Times

Good morning.

Millions of people from across the world visit Yosemite National Park each year for an opportunity to take in the sweeping vistas at one of America's most treasured natural preserves. But hundreds of visitors were ordered to evacuate the park Wednesday as firefighters struggled to contain the encroaching 38,000-acre Ferguson Fire, which has roared for nearly two weeks and remains just 25 percent contained.

Dry conditions have made it difficult for firefighters to contain the flames.

“The conditions are incredibly strenuous, and we’re seeing triple-digit temperatures in places,” said Dan McKeague, a spokesman for the U.S. Forest Service. “Some sections are extremely remote. Access is limited because there aren’t a ton of existing roads.”

Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at U.C.L.A., said that long-term drying caused by rising global temperatures has exacerbated the risk of wildfires in the western United States.

“Over decades there has been a trend toward less moisture in the soil and forest, and that is affecting how dry the vegetation is becoming in summer,” he said.

Mr. Swain said the drought several years ago and resulting bark beetle infestations in forests have combined with rising temperatures to create difficult conditions for containing wildfires.

Scott Gediman, a park ranger and spokesman for the National Park Service, said the last major closing because of fire at Yosemite was in 1990 during the A-rock Fire. A flood in 1997 closed the park for about two and a half months, he said, and since then there have been partial closings every so often.

“I’ve been a park ranger for 22 years now, so I have plenty of experience in shutting the park down,” Mr. Gediman said. “Floods, fires and my personal favorite: government shutdowns.”

Read about the Yosemite fire and other fires raging across the West here.

More coverage:

• “Disappointed visitors leave Yosemite as fire rages nearby” [San Francisco Chronicle]

• “What’s open, what’s closed and how to get a refund” [The Los Angeles Times]

• “New evacuation ordered in Ferguson Fire’s path” [The Fresno Bee]

• A **fast-moving fire** scorched 3,000 acres and threatened Idyllwild, in the San Jacinto Mountains, during an intense heat wave that broke records in cities across Southern California. [The Los Angeles Times]

California Online

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Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom was joined by the former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa at a news conference in downtown Los Angeles last month.

Richard Vogel/Associated Press

• Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom outlined his plans to tackle the state's worsening **homelessness problems** as part of his campaign to succeed Gov. Jerry Brown in November. [The Sacramento Bee]

• As the immigration debate intensified this year, sanctuary laws have become increasingly politicized. Here are 11 things to know about **living in a sanctuary state**. [The California Sunday Magazine]

Nia Wilson, 18, was killed after getting off a BART train with her sisters on Sunday.

Nia Wilson, 18, was killed after getting off a BART train with her sisters on Sunday.

Jim Wilson/The New York Times

• As **Nia Wilson's family planned her funeral**, the man accused of fatally stabbing her at an Oakland BART station was charged. [The New York Times]

• With companies like Facebook and Twitter drawing lines, it appears **Silicon Valley's near-absolutist ethos** of free speech is over, our tech columnist writes.

[The New York Times]

• More than **50 women sued U.S.C.** as abuse accusations against the former gynecologist George Tyndall continued to pile up. [The New York Times]

• For nearly two years, Facebook seemed bulletproof. Now its **stock has tumbled more than 23 percent** after months of scrutiny over the misuse of its platform in the 2016 election and the harvesting of its user data by Cambridge Analytica. [The New York Times]

• **President Trump's star** on the Hollywood Walk of Fame was destroyed — again — by a man with a pickax. [The New York Times]

• The San Jose liquor store that sold a winning ticket for the **$543 million Mega Millions jackpot** has been abuzz. [The Mercury News]

• A study suggests that **sperm counts** have been dropping for decades. These Silicon Valley start-ups are here to help. [The New York Times]

• The police are searching for a band of thieves who made off with **$10,000 worth of leggings** from a Lululemon in Fresno. [ABC 7]

• P-55, the **mountain lion who was famous** for crossing the 101 twice, has died. The cause of death is unknown, but researchers suspect rodenticide poisoning. [LAist]

In February, our visual reporter Walter Thompson-Hernández wrote about a group of men who gather to play pelota mixtecha, an indigenous Oaxacan game, as a way of preserving their culture and language in Los Angeles. Here, from left, Filiberto Cruz, Jorge Cruz, Jorge Cruz Jr., Jason Cruz, Reynaldo Cruz, and Dario Cruz.

Walter Thompson Hernandez/The New York Times

And Finally ...

A still from the animated video.

A still from the animated video.

Justin Leduc

The hooded figure vaguely resembles the Grim Reaper, but the structure it is grasping is unmistakably the Golden Gate Bridge.

Rain hits the window as the viewer looks down at the ominous scene. The short animated video has gone viral on Instagram; as of this morning, it's racked up more than 10 million views.

"I'm so confused and terrified and impressed," one commenter wrote.

The video is the work of Justin Leduc, 30, a Canadian motion graphics artist who

said he chose the Golden Gate Bridge for artistic reasons.

The creepiest aspect of the piece, he said, was “the assembly of every element combined: the fog, the size of the monster, the vastness of the ocean.”

The monster, to be clear, is not the Grim Reaper. Mr. Leduc said he was inspired by the Nazgûls in the “Lord of the Rings” movies and didn’t intend for the figure to be the eeriest part of his piece. “Since the concept of surveilling people is a pretty popular theme among 3-D artists nowadays, I thought I’d go with that,” he said.

“I love the color and design of the bridge,” Mr. Leduc added. “I would love to visit it one day.”

California Today goes live at 6 a.m. Pacific time weekdays. Tell us what you want to see: CAtoday@nytimes.com.

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